

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## BRIEFS

**SPECIAL STATUS  
SOUGHT FOR 9/11**

**PITTSBURGH (BP)**—The interdenominational Christian group, In God We Trust, has collected more than 97,000 signatures in petitioning U.S. President Donald Trump to declare Sept. 11 an annual day of prayer, fasting, and repentance. Driven by II Chronicles 7:14, the initiative seeks to "reclaim the day" and return it to a confidence in God, said Don Black, founder of the two-year-old In God We Trust ministry and president/CEO of Cornerstone Television Network.

## TEACHER ROILS PARENTS AT CALIF. KINDERGARTEN

**ROCKLIN, Calif. (BP)** — A months-long debate on parental consent for controversial education topics continues after a California teacher introduced a kindergarten as transgender and read classmates two books on transgenderism. At least one parent told the school system her daughter was traumatized by the experience and became afraid that she might somehow turn into a boy. The issue has divided parents in the small Sacramento suburb, with one group asking the school system to acquire parental consent and another group defending the incident as helpful to their children's education.

## MINISTRY SUES SPLC OVER 'HATE GROUP'

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP) — One Christian ministry has apparently had enough of the Southern Poverty Law Center's disparaging "hate group" characterization. D. James Kennedy Ministries filed a lawsuit Aug. 23 in Alabama federal court alleging the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) "trafficked in false and misleading descriptions" of the ministry and that other entities also named in the suit perpetuated the libel. Christian ministries that affirm the Biblical view of marriage and human sexuality have earned the SPLC's hate group designation, which is repeated by many news media outlets without question.



**ON THE SCENE** — After a 12-hour, non-stop drive the day before, Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers report for duty before dawn on Labor Day at the mobile kitchen in operation at Annville Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Mississippi Baptists will work from the mobile kitchen to help bolster the estimated 135,000 meals per day currently being served by Southern Baptists to Hurricane Harvey victims and first responders. (BR photo courtesy of Willie Ree Williamson)

# Miss. Baptists in Texas

## Disaster Relief vols prepare meals for Harvey's victims

**CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (BP and local reports)** – The first 20 Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers are in Corpus Christi, Texas, preparing meals for Hurricane Harvey victims and first responders at a Southern Baptists of Texas mobile kitchen that is already set up and running.

"The two Texas Baptist conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention - the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Southern Baptists of Texas convention - along with Texas Baptist Men are co-ordinating the massive response in affected areas and providing

support for evacuees," reported Dan Gann, coordinator for Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) and director of men's ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), in an [mbcb.org](http://mbcb.org) web site update.

Gann estimated the combined Southern Baptist mobile feeding sites are currently preparing upwards of 135,000 meals per day. "All sites are indicating that water (and) other commodities

see TEXAS on p. 9

## Ezell, Trump discuss disaster relief

**WASHINGTON (BP)** — U.S. President Donald Trump met at The White House Sept. 1 with leaders of the three largest disaster relief organizations in the United States to discuss relief efforts in south Texas in the wake of historic flooding and other damage left by Hurricane Harvey.

Included at the meeting were Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDOR), represented by Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell; American Red Cross, represented by the group's president, Gail McGovern; and the Salvation Army, represented by David Hudson, the group's USA national chief secretary.

see EZELL on p. 11



**TALKING TEXAS** — Kevin Ezell (second from left) president of the North American Mission Board, represented Southern Baptist Disaster Relief in a meeting Sept. 1 with President Donald Trump in the Oval Office at the White House to discuss disaster relief efforts in Texas. Also present at the meeting were Gail McGovern (third from left), president of the American Red Cross, and David Hudson, the Salvation Army's national chief secretary. (BP screen capture courtesy of Fox News)

# LifeWay, WMU to help with relief, aid

**NASHVILLE (BP)** - Southern Baptist entities LifeWay Christian Resources and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) are offering support to victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas.

LifeWay in Nashville announced Sept. 1 that the organization is preparing to send Bibles and resources to the Houston area. The national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and the WMU Foundation, both headquartered in Birmingham, have announced they will assist hurricane victims with an initial \$5,000 HEART (Humanitarian Emergency Aid for Rebuilding Tomorrow) Fund grant.

LifeWay President and CEO Thom S. Rainer said LifeWay is committed to serving churches affected by the storm and resulting flooding. That will initially mean offering support and assistance to those on the ground now.

"While we can't begin to understand all that's been lost, we are supporting the North American Mission Board and Southern Baptist

see RELIEF on p. 9

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Nashville, Tennessee

SEP 16 2017

TEXAS-86X  
 80300 2910 90718  
 005 DTN  
 SCOTSMEN GAPT HISTORICAL SOC  
 901 COMMERCE ST STE 401  
 WASHINGTON 37203-3620



## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Painful lessons

The second anniversary of the sordid Ashley Madison scandal passed this summer without a lot of fanfare. That's understandable. The Toronto-based web site was in the business of arranging adulterous liaisons between married men and women when hackers broke into their database and released megabyte after megabyte of confidential information on who was using the site.

The company's slogan was, "Life is short. Have an affair." Men and women paid fees to subscribe to the web site hoping to hook up with willing sexual partners outside their marriages, with the company's assurance of complete confidentiality.

Complete confidentiality, that is, until the hackers gained access to the database. Celebrities and politicians were found among the account holders. Pastors in Mississippi received calls from church members confessing that they expected to be named in one of the data dumps and wanting to know how to break the news to their spouses and families. Suicides were blamed on the exposed information.

Companies and institutions everywhere, worried about their public image, conducted investigations. Internet entrepreneurs sprang up to help companies locate employees' names in the massive data dumps.

A high-ranking employee of a Mississippi company was called into his boss's office and asked about his involvement with Ashley Madison. With his job, career, family, and community reputation on the line, it turned out there was another man with the identical name in the same city but with a different home address and e-mail listed on the account.

The folly of engaging in such sinful conduct was borne out in an analysis of the information in the data dumps by Gizmodo, a technology blog. Gizmodo found that many of the female accounts were created on the same days from the same IP addresses and never used again after being registered. That means those female accounts were fakes.

The Independent, a London-based newspaper, reported that a former employee sued Ashley

Madison in 2012 claiming that her job was to create thousands of fictitious female accounts, and that she suffered repetitive stress injury as a result. The Independent reported the case was quietly settled out of court by Ashley Madison's owners.

Gizmodo concluded that only 9,700 of the five million female account holders ever responded to a message from a man offering to commit adultery with them. "The women's accounts show so little activity that they might as well not be there," wrote Gizmodo's editor-in-chief Annalee Newitz, who personally conducted the analysis.

What that means for all the men who had an Ashley Madison account is that they had less than a .002% chance of ever connecting with a woman who wanted to have an affair with them. Yet millions upon millions of men were willing to risk everything important to them in their lives for the chance.

The second observation to be made is how surprised people seem to be that so many men and women want to be unfaithful to their spouses. Really? Where have these people been for the past five decades? The country was in trouble long before Ashley Madison was invented. Ask a pastor about the biggest threat to the Christian church in America today, and he'll probably say marital infidelity. So many Christians — correction: so many people who claim to be Christians — are engaging in unfaithfulness that the divorce rate in the Christian community is virtually the same as among non-Christians. Churches, like the families involved, are being torn asunder and our witness to a lost world is being deeply affected.

Finally, we should remember to continue to pray for the Ashley Madison victims such as innocent spouses, devastated children, ruined ministries, even the exposed adulterers themselves. They're living with the lingering, unimaginable pain of this scandal.

It's not our calling to send a firing squad. It's our calling to send an ambulance. The Great Physician who called us would have us do no less for those deeply wounded in this debacle.

After what our Lord and Savior did for us — sinners all — it's the least we can do for Him.

## Why have a church wedding?

Our culture sometimes makes marriage seem lame and outdated, but marriage is a precious gift from God, ordained and designed by Him so we can bring glory to Him by serving Him together, keeping our commitment to each other, and enjoying one another.

I recommend church weddings for Christians. It doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive, but here's my case for church weddings for believers:

■ A church wedding recognizes God's divine plan for marriage and indicates that the bride and groom seek the blessings of heaven upon their relationship and the home they are establishing.

■ A church wedding signifies that the couple acknowledges the importance of being bound together by a spiritual love. In premarital counseling as a pastor, I always urged engaged couples to understand the significance of three Greek words for love: eros, phileo, and agape.

Eros is the Greek word from which we get our word, "erotic," and signifies the importance of intimate sexual love, which is to be reserved for marriage.

Phileo is more of a social or friendship kind of love, and in a marriage both the bride and groom should be marrying their best friend. They cultivate that kind of love by sharing life and doing things together.

Agape is a spiritual love, the kind of love God has for us and the kind of love that is enhanced as each partner in marriage grows in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It is agape love that will bind the couple together in cords that cannot be broken. When a couple say their vows at the altar of marriage they should understand they are promising to love each other with eros, phileo, and agape love until death parts them.

■ A Christian wedding should be considered a worship service. It has all the properties of a worship service. There is a minister, a congregation of people, a message (the citing of biblical principles and a charge to the bride and groom), and Christian music.

In a Sunday worship service most people do not know the commitments made at the altar, but in a wedding the whole congregation is able to witness the commitments made by the bride and groom at the altar and help keep them accountable to their vows.

■ A church wedding that is supported by prayer and careful planning may result in



## Guest opinion

with Gerald Harris

young people seeing God's divine plan for marriage and give married couples an opportunity to renew their vows as they watch the bride and groom pledge their solemn oaths to each other.

■ Since unredeemed people often come to weddings and funerals I generally have requested permission from the bride and groom to present the Gospel on such occasions. I would typically recount the salvation stories of the couple and urge each attendee to open his/her heart to the redemptive work of Christ.

■ Marriage is more than a civil contract. It is a sacred covenant. Since the U.S. Supreme Court has diminished the whole concept of marriage by legalizing same sex unions, it is all the more important to counter the secularization of marriage by celebrating God's divine plan for marriage in a church worship ceremony.

Furthermore, a civil contract can be easily broken. A sacred covenant is meant to be binding and for a lifetime.

■ A Christian marriage establishes a spiritual foundation for the couple's children. Wedding vows should include the couple's promise to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Indeed, a church marriage whether large or small should signify that Christ will become the centerpiece of the new home and that both partners resolve to become more like Christ toward developing a strong, vibrant Christian marriage.

Harris, a former Mississippi Baptist pastor, is editor of *The Christian Index* ([christianindex.org](http://christianindex.org)), news journal of the Georgia Baptist Convention, where this column first appeared. His commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and length.

## THE Baptist Record

Editor  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
[wperkins@mbcb.org](mailto:wperkins@mbcb.org)

Associate Editor  
Tony Martin  
[tmartin@mbcb.org](mailto:tmartin@mbcb.org)

Layout/Design  
Megan Young  
[myoung@mbcb.org](mailto:myoung@mbcb.org)

Advertising  
Dana Richardson  
[d Richardson@mbcb.org](mailto:d Richardson@mbcb.org)

Circulation Manager  
Amy Massey  
[amassey@mbcb.org](mailto:amassey@mbcb.org)

Baptist Record  
Advisory Committee:  
Whit Lewis, New Albany  
Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko  
Carolyn Reeves, Oxford  
Garland Boyd, Brookhaven  
Lucy Stringer, Foxworth  
Don Hicks, Bay Springs

Postmaster:  
Send changes of  
address to: The Baptist  
Record, P.O. Box 530,  
Jackson, MS  
39205-0530.

Send news,  
communication,  
and address changes  
to: The Editor, Baptist  
Record, P.O. Box 530,  
Jackson, MS  
39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800  
Fax: (601) 292-3330  
E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org)



VOLUME 141 • NUMBER 35 • ISSN-0005-5778

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



# Sudan demanding control, demolition of churches

**OMDURMAN, Sudan (BP)** — Police arrested and interrogated seven Christian church leaders in Omdurman, Sudan, on Aug. 23 for refusing to turn over leadership of their church to the government, sources said.

The Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) leaders were interrogated for six hours and released on bail after being charged with refusing to comply with an order to turn over leadership of their congregation to a committee appointed by Sudan's Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments.

SCOC moderator Ayoub Mattan and SCOC head of missions Kwa Shamaal (also transliterated Kuwa Shamaal) were among those arrested. Shamaal was previously arrested Dec. 18, 2015 and acquitted more than two years later of charges ranging from spying to inciting hatred against the government.

Sudan had written a letter dated Aug. 14 ordering SCOC to hand over church leadership to the government committee, sources said. When the church leaders refused, police opened a case against them though it was unclear under what law.

"Police asked if we still maintain our stance on our refusal to acknowledge the committee appointed by the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowments, and we said yes because it is not the work of the [government] ministry to appoint committees for the church," Shamaal told Morning Star News.

Police said the arrests were in keeping with governmental orders to impose the committee as SCOC leadership, presumably to sell off the church property to demolish interests in Sudan's bid to rid the country of Christianity.

The pastors said the committee was contrary to SCOC's constitution, which calls for general elections every three years to appoint new leadership.

Mattan, Shamaal, and the others are still members of the legitimate executive committee of the SCOC, sources said. The current leadership term expires in March 2018.



Police also arrested minister Yagoub Naway and pastor Musa Kodi, both from the SCOC. The four Christians were interrogated along with three other church leaders, including SCOC finance secretary Abdulbagi Ali Abdulrahman and SCOC deputy finance secretary El-Amin Hassan Abdulrasool.

Six other SCOC members are in hiding after learning police were searching for them to arrest and interrogate, sources said.

Another SCOC pastor, Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor, received a 12-year sentence earlier this year after being charged with spying and trying to tarnish Sudan's image, but he was freed along with Abdulmonem Abdumawla of Darfur on May 11 after receiving a presidential pardon.

Tawor had been arrested along with Shamaal in December 2015. They were convicted on baseless charges of assisting Czech aid worker Petr Jasek in alleged espionage, causing hatred among communities, and spreading false information, their attorney noted.

Jasek was pardoned and released on Feb. 25.

Foreign diplomats and international rights activists took notice of the case after Morning Star News broke the story of the arrest of Tawor and Shamaal. Their arrests were seen as part of a recent upsurge in harassment of Christians.

Most SCOC members have roots among the ethnic Nuba in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan's South Kordofan state, where the government is fighting an insur-

gency. The Nuba and other Christians in Sudan face discrimination and harassment, as Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir has vowed to introduce a stricter version of Sharia (Islamic law) and recognize only Islamic culture and Arabic language.

In what some are calling a campaign to rid the country of Christianity, Sudan has designated 25 church buildings for destruction. On Aug. 2, a Baptist church in Omdurman located across the Nile River from Khartoum, the national capital, was demolished.

On May 7, Khartoum state authorities in Sudan demolished an SCOC building in the Khartoum suburb of Soba al Aradi, which began as a refugee camp for south Sudanese. A bulldozer sent by the Jebel Aulia locality

and the Ministry of Planning and Urban Development destroyed the church building.

Authorities had notified church leaders of the impending demolition just a week prior. The government reportedly claimed the churches were built on land zoned for residential or other uses or were on government land, but church leaders said it is part of a wider crackdown on Christianity.

Harassment, arrests, and persecution of Christians have intensified since the secession of South Sudan in July 2011. The Sudanese Minister of Guidance and Endowments announced in April 2013 that no new licenses would be granted for building new churches in Sudan, citing a decrease in the South Sudanese population.

Sudan has expelled foreign Christians and bulldozed church buildings since 2012 on the pretext that they belonged to South Sudanese. Besides raiding Christian bookstores and arresting Christians, authorities have reportedly threatened to kill South Sudanese Christians who do not leave or cooperate with them in their effort to find other Christians.

Sudan fought a civil war with the south Sudanese from 1983-2005. In June 2011, shortly before the August secession of South Sudan, the government began fighting a rebel group in the Nuba Mountains that has its roots in South Sudan.

Due to its apparent treatment of Christians and other human rights violations, Sudan has been designated a Country of Particular Concern by the U.S. State Department since 1999, and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended the country remain on the list in its 2017 report.

Sudan ranked fifth on Christian support organization Open Doors' 2017 World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most persecution.

*This article courtesy of Morning Star News, a California-based independent news service focusing on the persecution of Christians worldwide. Edited for style.*

## Iron Stream Media acquires WMU's New Hope Publishers

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)** — Iron Stream Media has acquired New Hope Publishers, the publishing arm of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Birmingham, in an effort to allow more readers to engage in relevant, contemporary issues with a missionary focus.

"With each book published by New Hope, we pray the content will transform the lives of believers and inspire them on their spiritual journey," said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director/treasurer of national WMU and publisher of New Hope.

"Because of Iron Stream Media's success in publishing and delivering solid, web-based Bible studies, we believe they are poised to position New Hope books and Bible studies for exponential impact for kingdom growth.

"The name [New Hope Publishers] will remain the same. The mission will remain the same. The employees our authors talk to will remain the same. I have complete confidence that only God could have orchestrated such details, and we are excited to see where He leads," said Wisdom-Martin.

John Herring, president and CEO of Iron Stream Media, noted his company initially began as a part of Student Life. The titles and studies associated with Student Life Bible Study were sold to NavPress. After a brief time with NavPress and the Navigators, Life Bible Study was born as an independent company and expanded to include content for adults and children in addition to students.

"Now known as Iron Stream Media, we produce curriculum, discipleship materials, educational content, and other tools for

ministries and missions," Herring said. "Much of our content is well-known by missionaries who use our studies at no cost in regions around the world.

"For our friends in the United States, we deliver incredibly beautiful Bible Study lessons designed to be taught in a variety of ways, keeping God's Word central in all we do. And, we do it very economically for our church partners.

"The Iron Stream team has a great fondness for New Hope Publishers," Herring pointed out. "We share a common love for the

Bible. We also share a common love for all things 'mission.' The acquisition of New Hope by Iron Stream is a natural merging of ministry minds — a combination that will enable us to grow faster together than we can separately."

Both New Hope Publishers and Iron Stream Media plan for a seamless transition. Iron Stream Media will welcome four New Hope Publishers staff members to their team and will continue to work at WMU's building in Birmingham, where Iron Stream leases office space and operates its business.

When I began my day on August 29, my mind focused on twelve years earlier. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Mississippi. The whole nation watched as the storm smashed and slashed our coastline and reached all the way into the interior of the state and at the same time was battering New Orleans and south Louisiana. This huge storm reached from south Alabama across Mississippi through south Louisiana. August 29 was the beginning, but the hurts and healing and helps continued to pour in for a decade and beyond.

I do not consider myself a first responder, though I have tremendous admiration for them. I was, and wanted to be, not only a "first care-er" but one who would continue to care for lives scattered and shattered and battered by that terrible storm. In the weeks and months and even years that were ahead, our Baptist Disaster Relief teams from all over Mississippi and indeed all over the Southern Baptist Convention came to help us not only to survive but to help us get back on our feet and see hope for a new day.

Months later as the rows and rows of Katrina Cottages began to spread across the coastline, the hurt and accompanying disillusionment and even depression continued as family after family arose each morning, thousands of them looking out a window of their little cottage at all the little cottages around them and wondering if life would ever be put back together and return to any sense of normalcy as they once knew it. Many residents never returned to the Coast and never will, but others did come back and homes and businesses were restored and churches were rebuilt and strengthened and are continuing to go on with ministry to their communities and an entire area. That happened because the Lord placed on the hearts of thousands across our country to be first care-ers and they responded by giving millions for the restoration. Mississippi Baptists and residents of states all across our nation responded by taking an



## Providing Helps for the Hurts of Harvey

offering and volunteering to help with disaster relief.

Those thoughts of a dozen years ago were so fresh on my mind that morning. At the same time, we were beginning to get rain showers from the far outer bands of Hurricane Harvey, the most unusual storm of which anyone has a recollection. It grew overnight from almost nothing to a monster and when it moved ashore, it brought torrential rains and then put on the brakes and just hovered, pouring incredible amounts of water in unprecedented proportions on Houston, Galveston, Port Arthur, Beaumont, and most of the rest of the Texas Gulf Coast.

I don't even know how to think about this, but one news outlet reported that about 27 trillion gallons of rain fell on Texas and Louisiana. I don't know how to get my head or hands around that figure, but I know this — the result was there was nowhere for that water to go except pile up in roads and yards and businesses.

Harvey was not finished after a few days over south Texas. He backed out into the Gulf, picked up more moisture, and made landfall again near the Texas-Louisiana line. He has been on the move, slowly but surely heading northeast and passing over much of Louisiana and skirting the Delta and north Mississippi. Of course all of us got rain, but thankfully we did not get the devastation suffered across Texas and many parts of Louisiana.

Storms are obviously a part of our lives. Here in Mississippi we get them all: hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, floods. Storms have always been a part of life and as you read the Gospels you become aware of the fact that Jesus not only was aware of storms, He was in storms at times. One such storm comes up in chapter four of the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus is in a boat with His disciples. In Mark chapter six, another storm hits and Jesus is not in the boat with the disciples but was certainly aware of the storm

and comes to them. I think the most important thing is to realize that God cares. He comes, He comforts, and He still does today.

How does He do that? I truly believe He uses the extension of His own life and love through His people. Today that is where you and I are vitally important. What can you do to help with the needs that are right here before us during this hurricane season? For one, you can pray and ask God to work His wisdom and way in the tragedies that are around us. He can do that. He can do things in the lives of people who may be going through the tragedy, but He can also do things in our lives to help with the tragedy. Pray that God will be at work in us.

Beyond that, you can give. There are hundreds of disaster responses taking place right now and many of them are excellent, but you can give to help the hundreds — thousands — of Mississippi Baptist volunteer responders whether in Texas, Louisiana, or here in Mississippi. You can give through your church, and the church can give to 2017 Hurricane Relief, or you can send a check directly to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board designated for 2017 Hurricane Relief, or give online at [mbcb.org/giving/](http://mbcb.org/giving/).

Why do that? Why give? One, because much has been given to us. Two, others have helped us through our tragedies. Three, God has spared us and blessed us with new days and new ways. Four, You and I have the opportunity to make a difference. Every dollar given to Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief goes directly to the relief of victims. Your gift will go forward to make a difference in the name of Christ, lived in personal ways with the love of Jesus through His servants who are on the scene and answering the needs of people.

May God bless you as we serve as instruments of His love and mercy in this present tragedy, and into the future.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## First Person: Want to quit, pastor? Don't do it.

By H.B. Charles  
Correspondent

Second in a two-part series

As a young pastor embroiled in congregational conflict, I once told my pastoral mentor I was going to resign my church. He warned me that trouble would find me wherever I preached the Bible and lifted the name of Jesus. He encouraged me to stay put, keep preaching, and not grow weary in well doing.

I heeded his counsel, and I am glad I did. So how do you preach faithfully under the pressure that arises against



CHARLES

your leadership, ministry or pulpit?

### ■ Be a shepherd.

I went to hear a pastor who was going through conflict in his church. I knew he was in conflict because that's what he preached about, giving his side of the story and berating his opposition. After the service, several older women stopped me and said, "Rev. Charles, please know that he was not talking about us. We are not fighting him. We love him."

Be careful not to harm the sheep in the name of fighting the wolves. Be a shepherd. Lead a id feed the flock. Those whom you call wolves in sheep's clothing may be sheep who have gone astray.

■ Believe what you preach. When I complain about my life or ministry, my wife accuses me of not

"Preachers regularly stand in the pulpit and challenge the congregation to trust God no matter what, but pressure-filled seasons of ministry require you to put your faith where your pulpit is and trust God no matter what. It is much easier to preach what you believe than it is to believe what you preach."

listening to the sermons in church. She levels this charge knowing I am the one who preaches the sermons at our church. It is a stinging but needed rebuke.

Preachers regularly stand in the pulpit and challenge the congregation to trust God no matter what, but pressure-filled seasons of ministry require you to put your faith where your pulpit is and trust God no matter what. It is much easier to preach what you believe than it is to believe what you preach.

### ■ Know when not to preach.

One Sunday morning, my father who also was a pastor was blindsided by news his minister of music had resigned. It was not the resignation that bothered him so much. It was the fact that a key church leader withheld the news from him. My father felt betrayed.

With his sermon manuscript sitting in front of him, he asked one of the associates to preach. "I am too angry," he said. "The Lord cannot use me this morning." Watch

ing this taught me more than any sermon he would have preached that day. Sometimes the best way to preach under pressure is to not preach.

### ■ Love your enemies.

The pastor must shepherd the flock the Lord redeems and places under his care. It is the Lord's flock. We are under-shepherds who will give account to the Chief Shepherd. We must watch over the stubborn sheep, as well as the loyal ones. We must love our enemies, not just our friends. This is not only our pastoral calling, it is our Christian duty.

Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Church in Jacksonville, FL, is currently the president of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference.





**W**e hold dear the Ten Commandments. They symbolize our belief in the infallible, inerrant Word of God. Though they are part of the Old Covenant, they are still relevant in today's world.

The Ten Commandments divide into two groups, 1-4 and 6-10, with #5 as the hinge. The first four are upward and deal with God. The last five are outward and deal with our fellowman. "Honor your father and mother" is a segue between the two.

The tenth of the Ten Commandments is special — "Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20:17). It is the final "Word" of the "Ten Words." It serves as a transition from Law to Grace. Numbers six through nine are all external actions, but number ten moves to a different level — the heart. The sin in number ten is not an action but an attitude. It concerns the desire of the inward man. We

should not seek after what belongs to someone else — house, wife, or money.

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) says we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Whatever would please you and bring you joy, that is what you should desire for your brother, your friend, your fellow human being.

Jesus said the second greatest commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," (Mark 12:31 KJV). If I love my neighbor as much as I love myself, I will not be selfish or greedy. I will not be a hoarder.

We love to quote Philippians 2:5 (KJV), "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," but back up and put this verse in context.

## 'Nuff Said

Verse 2 says, "Fulfill ye my joy." Verses 3 and 4 say, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." I should put the welfare of others above self. JOY — Jesus first, others second, yourself third.

The Sermon on the Mount says, "Love your enemies," Matthew 5:44 (KJV). We should be givers, not takers. We should not take away another's coat or shirt (Matthew 5:40) but should share (Matthew 5:42). Our goal should not be to acquire the material possessions of others — even our enemies.

Where is this going? September 17 is ANTI-GAMBLING SUNDAY. When someone gambles, they risk a smaller amount of money trying to gain a larger amount of money. The only way for one person to "win" at gambling is for others to lose. When one gambles, he "covets" what formerly belonged to another. Thou shalt not covet.

The guy who gets the "gold" by gambling has broken the Golden Rule. Most gamblers want to win. They want others to lose. Something has gone wrong here.

If I love my neighbor as myself, I will not take from him what he wants to keep. Even if he is my enemy, I am to love him. The gambler loves money more than he loves his neighbor or enemy.

Gambling is a result of materialism. A gambler values material things more than spiritual things. Matthew 6:24 (KJV) says, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (material wealth — MONEY).

If I consider my brother better than myself, I will not take his money. Watching the soldiers gamble at the foot of the cross for Jesus' seamless robe should be enough to turn us from this pastime.

The LOTTERY is GAMBLING — 'NUFF SAID!

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at [kdigby@christianaction.com](mailto:kdigby@christianaction.com).

## Statement challenges soft view of sexual sins acceptance

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — A coalition of evangelical leaders that includes about 70 Southern Baptists has issued a statement on biblical sexuality to counter the idea that Christians "should agree to disagree" in their views of homosexuality and transgenderism.

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) announced Aug. 29 the release of The Nashville Statement, which consists of 14 affirmations and denials consistent with the church's long-held teaching on human sexuality.

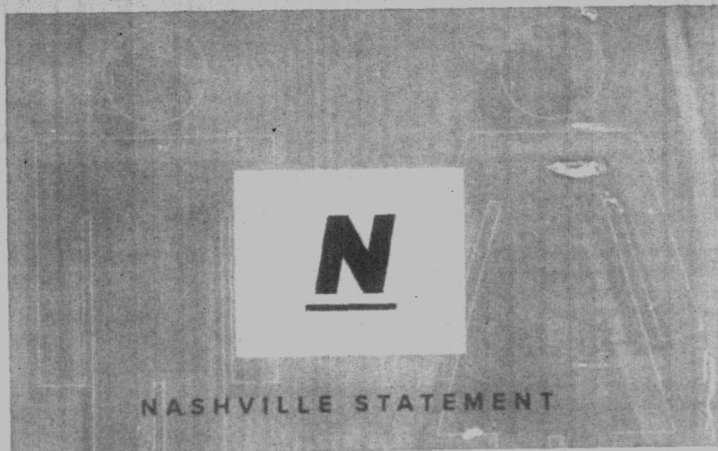
The article that may gain the most attention is the document's declaration on the acceptability of evangelical disagreement regarding the issues of homosexuality and gender identity.

Article 10 says, "WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness. WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree."

The statement, and Article 10 in particular, arrives at a time when some self-identified evangelicals have revised their views on human sexuality by affirming same sex relationships and marriage.

Others have asserted the issues are not essential to the Christian faith and evangelicals should be able to disagree on homosexuality and transgenderism without breaking fellowship.

The statement gained its name from a meeting CBMW convened Aug. 25 in Nashville at which a coalition of scholars, pastors, and other evangelical leaders discussed and endorsed the document.



The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) hosted the meeting during its national conference and in conjunction with its Research Institute meeting.

In "the hope of serving Christ's church," the statement includes these declarations:

■ God designed marriage as a covenantal union of only a man and a woman that is the sole context for sexual intercourse.

■ God created male and female as equals but with differences intended for human flourishing.

■ Adoption of a homosexual or transgender self-conception "is inconsistent with God's purposes."

■ Same sex attraction is not part of God's original design, but people who experience such attraction may live fruitful lives through faith in Christ as they practice purity.

■ God graciously empowers sinners "to forsake transgender self-conceptions" and "accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female."

■ People born with a sex development disorder possess the same "dignity and worth" as all other image-bearers of God.

CBMW President Denny Burk said the statement's aim "is to shine a light into the darkness — to declare the goodness of God's design in our sexuality and in creating us as male and female."

The coalition hopes to "provide help for churches and Christian organizations that are looking for biblical guidance on how to address homosexuality and transgenderism," said Burk, also professor of biblical studies at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

The coalition also seeks to build a group of "like-minded evangelicals to stand together for the challenging days ahead" and to encourage young evangelicals who are under pressure to desert biblical teaching, he said in a written statement.

ERLC President Russell Moore described the statement as "an urgently needed moment of Gospel clarity." He said in a written endorsement, "The Sexual Revolution cannot keep its promises, and the church must stand ready to receive with compassion the many who are in need of a better hope."

The Nashville Statement is part of that mission, and my prayer is that it will help anchor churches and Christians to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for years to come."

The lengthy list of Southern Baptist signers includes eight former SBC presidents; all six SBC seminary presidents; H.B. Charles, current president of the SBC Pastors' Conference and pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Church in Jacksonville, Fla.; and five SBC entity heads.

Nashville Mayor Megan Barry, however, took exception to the name and the content of The Nashville Statement, tweeting: "The @CBMWorg's so-called 'Nashville Statement' is poorly named and does not represent the inclusive values of the city & people of Nashville."

The Nashville Statement is available online at [cbmw.org](http://cbmw.org).

## Just for the Record



**OAK GROVE CHURCH, BENTONIA**, held a blessing of the backpacks service.



Baby dedication at **DESOTO HILLS CHURCH, SOUTHAVEN**, was held on March 26. Shown is Bentley Cathleen Smith, the daughter of Jeremy & Ashley Smith.



A deacon ordination was held at **BUNKER HILL CHURCH, COLUMBIA**, on August 13. Pictured from left to right, Debbie Ostheimer; Sterling Ostheimer, newly ordained deacon; pastor Randy Gardner; Garrett Douglas, newly ordained deacon; Ashley Douglas, and David Brown, head of deacons.



**FREDONIA CHURCH, NEW ALBANY**, held a missions organization recognition service Aug. 30. The Mission Friends, GA's, and RA's received certificates, medals, and badges during the service.

### In other Church

#### News:

► **County Line Church, Union**, is hosting The Gospel Messengers in concert Sept. 9, 7 p.m.

► The State of Mississippi Open Horse Show Association will host **Cowboy Church** Sept. 10, 7 a.m., in the Equine Center on the Jackson Fairgrounds. Greg Renfrow, speaker.

► **First Church, Crystal Springs**, is hosting a presentation by Creation Ministries International Sept. 10. Dinosaurs & Fossils: Amazing Evidence for Creation, 9:30 a.m.; Creation Not Confusion, 10:45 a.m.; Alien Intrusion: UFOs & the Evolution Connection, 5 p.m.

► **Main Street Church, Hattiesburg**, is hosting a Hattiesburg area hymn sing Sept. 10, 6 p.m. The program is presented by First Church, Sumrall; Bellevue Church, Hattiesburg; Calvary Church, Hattiesburg; First Church, Purvis; Main Street Church, Hattiesburg; and Dixie Church, Hattiesburg. Love offering.

► **Airport Church, Grenada**, is hosting a Gospel sing Sept. 10, 5 p.m., featuring Second Chance, Michelle Kendall, Harvey and Dianne Vance, and others. Finger food after the singing. Lynn Welch, pastor.

► **Southwestern Seminary Mississippi Alumni Meeting** will be noon Oct. 31. Tickets to this year's alumni lunch at Jackson Capitol Club will be \$18 per person. Please send checks to either: Paul Blanchard, P.O. Box 867, Louisville, MS 39339, or Archie Herrin, 1962 National Guard Road, Columbia, MS 39429.

► Jeff and Sherri Easter will be in concert at **Salem Church, Lake**, Sept. 10, at 6:00 pm. For more information call (601)775-8272.



**TRINITY CHURCH, LAUREL**, licensed Ken Johnson to preach the gospel Aug. 27.



**HEPZIBAH CHURCH, CLARKE COUNTY**, ordained William Chancellor to the Gospel Ministry. Pictured L to R - Chancellor, Keith Stewart, and Keith Bogan.



**FIRST CHURCH, LAUDERDALE**, ordained Dale Collins and Jimmy Reynolds to the Deacon Ministry on August 27. Pastor Wayne Edwards delivered the charge to the candidates prior to the laying on of hands. Pastor Richie Davis brought the challenge to the church. Shown are Collins, Gay Collins, Davis, Megan Reynolds, and Reynolds.



**GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, recognizes its top readers in its Summer Reading Club. Shown are Dylanne Johnson, Niley Wentworth, Tatum Womack, and Lane Bates.



**BROOKS MINISTRY INSURANCE**

Mike Brooks  
Agency Principal

an authorized agency of  
**Brotherhood Mutual**  
Insurance Company

Call today for a free quote **601.208.0920**  
or email: **mike@brooksministryinsurance.com**

Property • Auto • Liability • Workers' Compensation

SUPPORT A LOCAL BUSINESS AND BUY A NATIONAL NAME AT THE SAME TIME. A WIN-WIN FOR MS CHURCHES.

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

CEL JVVGAEU ZTVE DONZN CN XO

SCJGOL, XO NCAPX, FOXVJL PXO JCBF

VR UVL!

DVXE VEO: PXAYPQ-NAK

*Clue: F = B*

*Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Forty: Eight*

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **New Prospect Church, Lincoln Association:** Homecoming, Sept. 10; memorial service, 10:45 a.m., followed by worship, singing, and covered dish lunch; Ronnie Robinson, speaker; Tate Allen, music.

► **Sylvarena Church, Wesson:** Homecoming, Sept. 10; covered dish luncheon; Cody Warren, speaker; Karen Hardy Fisk, music.

► **Mt. Nelson Church, Philadelphia:** homecoming and 175th anniversary, Sept. 10; service, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Douglas Warren, speaker; Tom McCurley, pastor.

► **Oak Grove Church, Benton:** Revival, Sept. 11 - 13; Sun., 10 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Ricky Blythe, speaker.

► **Holly Bluff Church, Holly Bluff:** Homecoming and 100th anniversary, Sept. 10; service, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner and singing; Andy May, speaker.

► **Victory Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Sept. 10; service, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Mike Sutton, speaker; Dogwood Cross, music; Wade Walton, pastor.

► **County Line Church, Union:** Revival, Sept. 10 - 13; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Cook, speaker; Jerry Jay, music.

► **Self Creek Church, Macon:** 116th homecoming, Sept. 10; service, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and singing; Bryan Oswalt, speaker; Allen Sibley Group, music; Larry Watson, pastor.

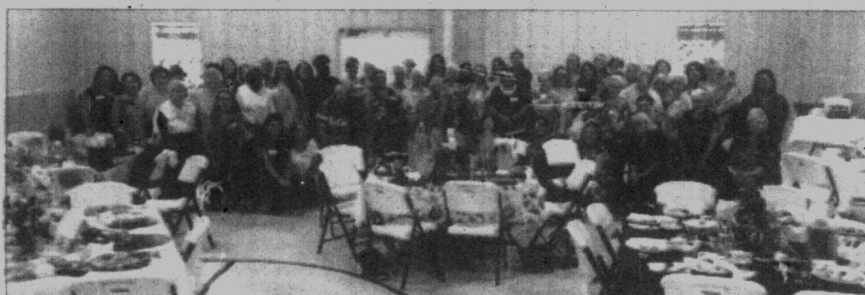
## Just for the Record



**PILGRIM REST CHURCH, ETHEL**, honored Ann Philly for 30+ years of service as children and music director. Shown is pastor Tommy Allen and Philly.



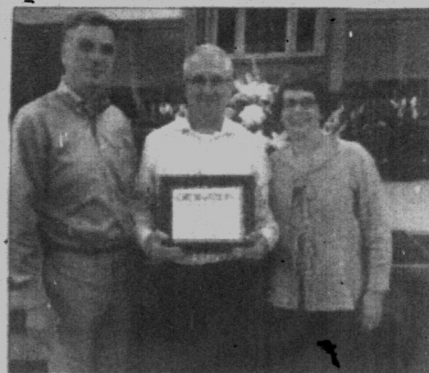
**SUNFLOWER CHURCH, SUNFLOWER**, recently honored Willie Mae Cook Henry with an appreciation day. The plaque presented to her mentions over 40 years as Sunday School secretary and treasurer.



**NEW HOPE CHURCH, GULFPORT**, WINGS Ministry (Women In God's Service) hosted their Daughters of the King Birthday Tea-Party on August 26. Tammy Turnage, guest speaker.



**HURRICANE CREEK CHURCH, SANDY HOOK**, ordained Mike Stringer (left) as a deacon August 29. Shown with Stringer is Zachary Smith (right).



Bobby Taylor was ordained a deacon on August 27 by **FIRST CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO**. Shown with Taylor are Barry Corbett, Pastor, Taylor, and wife, Carol.



Joyful Noise, the senior adult choir from **FIRST CHURCH, FLORA**, sang to the residents of Highland Home, Ridgeland, Aug. 17, followed by lunch at Trace Grill, Ridgeland.

# Diaspora conference a crucial ministry tool in today's world

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — A diaspora ministry conference inaugurated last year was so successful that organizers have scheduled a second event Oct. 27-28 at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Chuck Register, former senior pastor of First Church, Gulfport, and currently executive leader for church planting and missions partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC), is an organizer for the Reaching the Nations in North America summit.

Register said he was "more than pleased" with the response to last year's conference in Brentwood, Tenn. "There were just under 400 registered participants, which was beyond our expectation. We hoped for around 175. We had practitioners from all across America — 25 states were represented by the group."

J.D. Payne, one of the keynote speakers, said it was the largest gathering ever of Southern Baptists to address diaspora ministry, targeted at people as well as people groups living outside their country of birth.

Attendees sought inspiration and information about diaspora ministry, including practical breakout sessions, Register said. Breakout sessions, which he considered "the most helpful aspect of the conference," provided tools and strategies for participants to return to their communities and begin to engage immigrants, refugees and international students.

Event sponsors include the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), Southeastern Seminary (SEBTS) and BSCNC.

Keynote speakers will be Danny Akin, SEBTS president; J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, Durham, N.C.; Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Church, Marietta, Ga.; Payne, pastor for church multiplication at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, Ala.; and Chris

Clayman, associate director of Global Gates Network.

At least 32 breakouts will be led by BSC staff, SEBTS faculty, key leaders at IMB and NAMB, and other mission strategists.

"We feel like we have an extremely strong lineup of plenary speakers," Register said. "We have some very strategic field personnel from IMB and NAMB who will be leading breakout sessions on how to engage different worldviews with an understanding of the Gospel."

The original plan was to schedule a second Reaching the Nations conference for 2018, but attendees last year requested momentum, Register said.

"They felt it was excellent training for them and they wanted to get the next conference on their schedule soon, so the planning committee agreed but moved the conference later into the 2017 fall season," he said. "The location allows more students to participate in the event."

Register told the Biblical Recorder, BSCNC's newsjournal, that the conference is needed because, "Southern Baptists are behind the curve in responding to diaspora ministry in the U.S., compared to other denominations. We've got a lot of ground to make up in mobilizing local churches to be engaged with diaspora ministry."

Conference organizers say having another conference one year later shines a spotlight on both the opportunity and the challenge of diaspora ministry.

"There are 45 million foreign-born residents in the U.S. and another seven million in Canada," Register said. "The average Southern Baptist church is probably not as engaged in diaspora ministry as she needs to be."

"Having a conference each year gives us the opportunity to blow this trumpet, to shine a light on what God has done in bringing the nations to North America and our Great Commission responsibility to respond to that challenge. The conference gives local churches some practical handles on how to engage in diaspora ministry."

To register, visit [Reachingthenations.net](http://Reachingthenations.net). Three of the breakouts and all five plenary sessions will be live-streamed.



REGISTER



**RACE AND SBC** — Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines (third from left) participated in a panel discussion on race and the Southern Baptist Convention, hosted by Cornerstone Church senior pastor Dwight McKissic (center) in Arlington, Texas. Also shown are other panelists and program participants. (BP photo)

## Panel discusses tough racial issues, political differences

ARLINGTON, Texas (BP) — Evangelicals are willing to challenge political leaders who support same sex marriage and abortion, and they should also stand strongly against vitriolic rhetoric, violence and hatred, Dwight McKissic said in a panel discussion on racial tension he hosted Aug. 20 at Cornerstone Church in Arlington, Texas, where he serves as senior pastor.

Among guests on the panel was Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Steve Gaines, senior pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, who renounced racial and political hatred and stressed it has no place in a Christian's life.

Speaking to an ethnically diverse audience of around 650 people, the African American McKissic addressed the racially-charged violence in Charlottesville, Va. He specifically expressed disappointment in U.S. President Donald Trump, who publicly blamed "both sides" for the clash between white nationalists and counter-protesters that left one young woman dead.

"Evangelicals need to say on this issue, we respect the president... but on this issue, he's wrong and he's giving air to these racists, and he needs to stop it, period," McKissic said. "Barack Obama was wrong on same sex marriage. I said it. Half of my church voted for him. He was wrong."

In addition to Gaines and McKissic, there were seven other panelists that included pastors, a law enforcement official, and an educator for discussion titled, A Kingdom

Conversation on Race and the Alt-Right.

Panelists accepted questions from the audience in a discussion following a 6:30 p.m. worship service and corporate prayer.

Gaines, who described his pastorate as composed of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, said such political diversity "makes it hard" to discuss presidents from any specific party.

"I think we ought to be mature enough in the Lord to look at anyone and say I disagree with what you're saying, but I still respect you as a person," Gaines said. "You have to respect the office to have any civility in the nation, and whether you respect everything a person in the office does, that's another matter."

"I pray for Donald Trump every day, not because I believe in everything he does but because he's the president."

Gaines noted, "I have learned to disagree with people's views... but we have no right to hate anyone, and whether it's the president currently, we have no right, not as a Christian. You have no right to hate Barack Obama. You don't. You can disagree with somebody's views."

McKissic, who introduced a resolution condemning alt-right white supremacy that was adopted at the 2017 SBC annual meeting in June in Phoenix, organized the Texas event to begin rebuilding national unity.

"I thought it was important for us to experience joint worship," McKissic told Baptist Press after the event, "and by doing so we made a statement to our God, the world, and ourselves."

The 90-minute discussion drew questions regarding Trump, diversity among Southern Baptist leadership, the lingering effects of America's systematic enslavement of black people, ethnic diversity among Southern Baptist congregations, unity among evangelicals, effective dialogue among different ethnic groups, and educating today's children about race relations.

In response to a question regarding the lingering effects of past racism, Gaines said he found it difficult to grasp the pain African Americans still experience as a result of slavery, particularly the separation of families characteristic of the injustice.

"It's hard to be sold. It's hard for me to even fathom what it was like at those auction blocks where families were torn apart," Gaines said when asked what is the proper response to suggestions that blacks "get over" the past.

"I have 10 grandbabies, one on the way, and I can't even fathom my children being sold into slavery. So there's no doubt that that caused a huge impact. So I feel like for somebody to say get over it, that's a wrong response."

Gaines encouraged pastors to be intentional in embracing other ethnicities in ministry outreaches and evangelism. The SBC president pointed to a monthly breakfast meeting he hosts with a diverse group of pastors in Memphis.

"We have been discussing... all of the issues that we're talking about here," Gaines said, "and it really gives me a perspective that otherwise I would not have."





## MS POSITIONS

**BURNSVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BURNSVILLE, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** We are a small congregation. Please send resume to Burnsville First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 522, Burnsville, MS 38833.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**PARKVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, METairie, LOUISIANA, LOOKING FOR EARLY LEARNING CENTER DIRECTOR.** For more info 504-887-1733 or 504-886-1153.

**GET THE BEST RATES ON:** Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-541-8196 or visit [www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com](http://www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com)

**NORRIS BOOKBINDING COMPANY, INC., OLD BIBLES REBOUND.** Also, church bulletins and hymnals. For more information call 662-453-7424 or fax us at 662-455-6743.

**HOPPER STAINED GLASS:** Custom windows, restoration and repairs, safety and insulated glass, custom aluminum and wood frames. Statewide 601-502-0202, [www.hoperglass.net](http://www.hoperglass.net)

**WINDOW AND SCREEN SHOP** — windows and storm windows built to fit your opening. Plus new window screens and rescreen old screens. Call Tom Cook 601-709-4879.

**WWW.SEBRENNHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM.** Christian owned Don & Rita Sebrén. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

**STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC.,** serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

**CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE ESTIMATES.** Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617

**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS:** Gulf Shores & Orange Beach, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach. [www.gulfshorescondos.com](http://www.gulfshorescondos.com), 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2366.

**PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE:** Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Member of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4608 or [bennyhornsby.com](mailto:bennyhornsby.com)

**HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, MERIDIAN, DESIGN, FABRICATION, REPAIR.** [Heidelbergstainedglass.com](http://Heidelbergstainedglass.com) or call wk 601-483-7958 or cell 601-616-1390.

**GATLINBURG RENTAL:** Cabin \$95/night. Contact 832-922-0401 or Email: [pdw4760@att.net](mailto:pdw4760@att.net) for information and booking.

## RELIEF

cont. from p. 1

Disaster Relief efforts in Texas," Rainer said. "As churches begin to recover, we will provide resources and Bibles to impacted areas through our disaster assistance program."

Southern Baptist pastors affected by the storm can receive replacement resources for their library, including a set of commentaries, study tools, and access to numerous digital resources.

Churches can also apply for replacement of one quarter's worth of LifeWay-published ongoing curriculum materials. In addition, specific discounts on pew Bibles and hymnals will be available for affected churches moving forward.

Impacted pastors and churches can email DisasterAssistance@LifeWay.com. After collecting names and contact information, LifeWay will coordinate with the pastors to find the best way to provide them and their congregations with the needed resources.

The \$5,000 HEART Fund grant will help WMU of Texas provide gift cards to those who have been impacted by

the storm. National WMU and the WMU Foundation leaders said they expect the organizations to make additional grants as relief efforts continue and rebuilding begins.

"Our prayer is this initial grant will provide some necessities for people who are hurting right now," said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director-treasurer of national WMU, an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. "We will continue to work with the WMU Foundation and WMU of Texas during clean-up and rebuilding, and we will pray for, support, and love our neighbors as they recover and rebuild."

The HEART Fund was created in response to the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001. Since that time, the WMU Foundation has granted more than \$473,000 from the HEART Fund to disaster victims in the United States and around the world.

For more information on how to assist those impacted by Hurricane Harvey through the HEART Fund, visit [wmufoundation.com](http://wmufoundation.com) or mail WMU Foundation HEART Fund, 100 Missionary Ridge, Birmingham, AL 35242.

## TEXAS

cont. from p. 1

are not being requested at this time," Gann wrote in the update. "Typically, a surge of donated items is received in the early days that meets initial demand. After those supplies are depleted, public requests will be made for additional items."

Financial gifts are the most critical need at present, he said. "Donations may be given through MBDR and will go directly to support victim recovery in partnership with local Baptist churches and associations."

"Donations may be made online at [mbcb.org/giving/](http://mbcb.org/giving/). Checks made payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, designated 'Hurricane Relief' on the memo line, may be mailed to MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530."

Gann also said church-to-church partnerships are currently being established through the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga. For more information and to sign up your church, visit [namb.net/harvey](http://namb.net/harvey).

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump met at The White House in Washington, D.C., with NAMB President Kevin Ezell and representatives of the American Red Cross and Salvation Army. NAMB coordinates Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.

"I am thankful that the Trump administration has prioritized this relief effort and for the values they are placing on the role faith groups can play," Ezell said prior to the meeting. "Southern Baptists have a great opportunity here to meet needs, share the love of Christ, and demonstrate our faith in action."

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

## "Hearing is Believing"

For a **FREE** consultation call  
Jackson 1-800-344-1200 or Hattiesburg 1-800-844-5821  
or go online at [www.audioservices.org](http://www.audioservices.org)

Professional Sound  
System Design and  
Installation  
Church / School / Commercial

**audio SERVICES**  
A DIVISION OF MISSISSIPPI MUSIC INCORPORATED

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

*"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Sean A. Milner, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 27  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
601-922-2242  
www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

### AUGUST 1-31 MEMORIALS

Mr. Randy Noble  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Mrs. Brenda L. Otts  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Fred Alvin Parish  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mary K. and J. V. Parker  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker  
Wayne Parker  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Mr. Noah Pate  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Ms. Sherry Peary  
Branch BC  
Mr. Gene Pellum  
Mr. Bert Nail  
Robbie Beall Petty  
Mr. George F. Petty  
Mrs. Jackie Phillips  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Bruton  
Mr. Richard Potin  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Billy Joe Price  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Andrew Ray  
Mr. & Mrs. Lamar Gordon  
Mrs. Jessie Vaughn Reed  
Jean & Derek Ferguson  
Mr. Bennie Robbins  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe D. Smith  
Ms. Hilda Roberts  
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Polk  
Mr. William H. Roop  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Pharr  
Kendall Lane Rushing  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Mrs. Peggy Rushing  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy G. Hastings  
Mrs. Libby Sims  
Dr. & Mrs. W. E. Moore, Jr.

Mr. David Marshall Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Maggio  
Betty & Ronnie Crosby  
Mr. John "Red" Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Brent Chastang  
Ms. Mavis Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Neal Corder  
& Family  
Mr. Keith Edward Spranger  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
John Aubrey Sterling  
Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Walsh  
Hilda Stewart  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Forbes  
Mr. Jack Sykes  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Mrs. Jerry Talley  
Mr. & Mrs. Dewitt Napier  
Mr. Gabe Terrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Gabriel "Gabe" Terrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Mr. Samuel Murry Tume  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Williamson  
Veronica (Sister of Janet Lancelin)  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Celia Ann Welch  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Mr. Sonny White  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Warren  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Hiriam Whittington  
Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Walsh

AUGUST 16-31

### HONORS

Ms. Elizabeth Prime  
Adult III SSC, North Columbia BC  
Rev. Zachary Smith  
Mrs. Elaine McKenzie

AUGUST 16-31

### MEMORIALS

Ms. Dorothy Rose Abel  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mrs. Marilyn J. Alford  
Mrs. Pam Simmons  
Mrs. Betty S. Simmons  
Mrs. Roberta Anderson  
Mrs. Carol J. Rather  
Laura Kate Bell  
Mrs. Carol H. Arthur  
Mrs. Josephine Bell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Johnny Ray Brooks  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Ms. Myrtle Burton  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Bell  
Ms. Suzanne Burton  
DAR Copiah Chapter  
Cleo Tubb Chamberlin  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Smothers  
Mr. G. W. Chrestman  
Mrs. Carol J. Rather  
Mr. Harrison M. Cook Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Mendrop  
Mrs. Mary Alice Cox  
Mrs. Alice Grisham  
Mrs. Mera C. Hall  
Thomas & Dixie Martin  
Ms. Virginia L. Green  
Ms. Tina Cheree Craft  
Lois Jensen  
Pam Eckman  
Ethan Craig  
Mr. Douglas N. Allen  
Ms. Betty Davis  
Mrs. Anne Wood  
Phillip Dixon  
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert L. Bond  
Betty Downs  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Mr. Arnold Dyre  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore, III  
Ken Evans  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mr. Walter Pruitt Ferguson  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Sims  
Mr. Freddie George  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Lou Higginbotham Hannah  
Shugualak BC  
Ms. Janice Harrison  
Rev. & Mrs. William B. Webb  
Mrs. Doris Mae Harvill  
Ms. Connie Mitchell  
Dot Harville  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry P. Franklin

Rev. Joe Herndon  
Mr. & Mrs. Jon A. Richard  
Clark Howell  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mrs. Mary Jarrell  
Adult Men's SSC, Pine Grove BC  
Ms. Katherine M. Furr  
Ms. Natalie Watkins  
Mrs. Margaret Ann McCully  
Jones  
Jimmie S. Edwards  
Chris & DeAnne Harris  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Grubbs  
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Walley  
Mr. Clarence M. Shantoo  
Mrs. Hazle M. Daniels and Family  
The Carroll's - Martin, Marilyn,  
David, Celeste, Harry

Mr. & Mrs. B. A. Hill  
Mr. & Mrs. Orby Wright  
Mrs. Mary C. Bentley  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Roche  
Mrs. Ella Kite  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Lecil Lee  
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert L. Bond  
Mr. Henry Franklin Martin  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Robert D. "Bob" Martin  
Mr. & Mrs. Doug Sproat  
Mr. & Mrs. Perry E. Atherton  
Mrs. Susie Bates  
June Mathis  
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert L. Bond  
Ms. Shirley McGee  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mr. John McLain

Mr. & Mrs. Perry E. Atherton  
Mrs. Jean Middleton  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Arvern Moore  
Mrs. Carol J. Rather  
Mr. J. T. Morrison  
Mrs. Nita Morrison  
Ms. Pam Moss  
Mr. & Mrs. Louis J. Dugas  
Mrs. Billie Sue Arnold Nellums  
Concord BC  
Mrs. Joyce Simpson Oglesby  
Mr. & Mrs. Glen Oglesby  
Mr. Ike Presley  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Mrs. Jane Rachel  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Herbert Frank Rhea Jr.  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

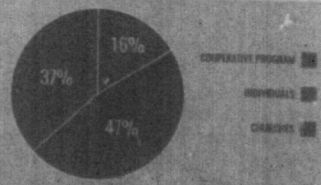
"Changing one life at The Baptist Children's Village will change generations."

The Baptist Children's Village staff is available to give an update about our ministry and share stories about changed lives. We can provide someone to speak in a church service, a Sunday school class, a mission group, etc. We want you to hear how your money is at work in the lives of Mississippi children and families.

You may schedule one of us to come at 601-952-2422 or go to www.baptistchildrensvillage.com/request-speaker to make your request online.

### THE BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE FUNDING

Over 11 million dollars in funding is needed annually to maintain and improve the services of The Baptist Children's Village. This includes the cost of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and other necessities. The Village is a non-profit organization and all funds are used for the benefit of the children and families in our care.



Let us update you and your group, and discuss the stewardship of your investment in the lives of BCV children. Please contact us to schedule your BCV speaker.

THE BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE • 714 HAWKINS DRIVE, RIDGE LAND, MS 39157 • 601-922-2422 • WWW.BAPTISTCHILDRENSVILLAGE.COM



## Confrontation • Exodus 7:1-13

I pushed button number four on the car's CD player, fast forwarded to track eight and turned the volume up. The music begins . . . "Glory battle", written by Michael W. Smith, "is a stirring song which Smith says represents spiritual warfare. This anthem is a clash between good and evil, darkness and light. The arrangement becomes imposing, but toward the end, the dark notes vanish and the light, air sounds dominate. The tune seems headed for a quiet ending, but it's not an ending, only a lull, as Smith thrusts us right back into battle with driving beats and racing strings" (NRTEAM Reviews, [www.newsreleasetoday.com//album](http://www.newsreleasetoday.com//album)). This instrumental composition could have been Moses' theme song as he marched forward with God.

Exodus 5 is Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh, it didn't go well, and Moses became discouraged. In the next chapter God makes His promises to Moses: I am sovereign (v. 1); I am who keeps covenant (vs. 2-5); I am the one who will redeem (v. 6); I am the one who will adopt (v. 7); I am the one who will give you an inheritance (v. 8). Chapter 7 brings Moses boldly before Pharaoh presenting the first

sign. The confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh was about God's power, authority and the work of redemption.

As we open Chapter 7 we have the opportunity to listen to God explain His strategy (7:1-5). Moses would be "like a god to Pharaoh" (v.1 ESV). He was God's ambassador, acting upon God's commands. Aaron would be a prophet for Moses' and act as God's mouthpiece, speaking what God commanded. Then we read, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will not listen to you" (v. 3). This statement has become a source of contention among Christians. Did Pharaoh have a choice? We see God hardening Pharaoh's heart (9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10), Pharaoh hardening his own heart (8:15, 32), and Pharaoh's heart being hardened without defining the source (7:22; 8:19; 9:7, 35).



### Explore the Bible with Laura Leathers

From John Piper's sermon titled, "The Hardening of Pharaoh and the Hope of the World": "Behind 'self-hardening' and the 'being hardened' is the plan and purpose of God. It is not described as a response to what Pharaoh does, but as a sovereign rule over what Pharaoh does" (see Romans 9:17-18). God is working in this world so all will recognize His power and sovereign rule.

Then we read, "Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them" (v. 6). They fully obeyed! "An important pattern for

all who attempt to obey God. Obedience to God's call does not mean everything will be easy. It may mean hardship, suffering, and persecution" (Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition-Exodus). At age 80 and 83 respectively, these men answered God's call, walking by faith with each step

required. No matter our age, God will empower and grace us with the ability to do His work.

Chapter 7 finishes with the first sign and wonder from God: changing the staff into a snake. Pharaoh's magicians displayed a similar wonder. God's power was demonstrated when the snake from Aaron's staff consumed the snakes of the magicians. Plagues two through nine are detailed through the end of chapter 10. Note: "There were about eight major deities in Egypt, all clustered about three great natural forces of Egyptian life: The Nile River, the land and the sky. . . The first two plagues were against the gods of the Nile. The next four plagues were against the land gods. The final four plagues were against the gods of the sky, culminating the death of the firstborn" states James Boyce (Ryken, Exodus, 216).

The battle is the LORD's and it was won at Calvary. Let's join Sniffy in singing, "I'm coming back to the heart of worship and it's all about you, It's all about you, Jesus . . ."

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

## Demons • Mark 9:17-29

Let's start with a strong teaching from Jesus in today's text that you or any other believer in Christ can apply immediately.

"After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it [the deaf and dumb demon] out?' And he told them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but prayer,'" Mark 9:28-29 (CSB).

While today's Bible lesson deals with demons, I want to look first at Jesus' teaching about prayer. Specifically, I want to look at the part prayer has in our exercising our God given callings. You remember that Jesus had sent the apostles out in Mark 3:13-15 "to preach and to have authority to drive out demons." This assignment from Jesus to drive out demons was a cause of great confusion to them when they could not drive the spirit out in this story.

William Barclay in his commentary on Mark explains it this way: When Jesus answered the apostles that this type of cure demanded prayer, He was in effect saying "You don't live close enough to God." They had been equipped with power, but it needed prayer to keep and maintain that power. There is a deep lesson for us here. God may have given us some gift, but unless we maintain close contact with Him that gift may wither and die. That is true of any gift. God may give a man great natu-

ral gifts as a preacher, but unless a man maintains contact with God, he may in the end become only a man of words and not a man of power."

Barclay's interpretation of Jesus' teaching on the power for healing coming through prayer is powerful. It also has direct application to many of you reading this Bible lesson preview preparing to teach God's word to your class this Sunday. I am convinced that as surely as God calls preachers and pastors he calls Sunday School teachers.

Let's look at the context in which Jesus taught about prayer, because this passage is full of other lessons, too. The disciples were embarrassed when they couldn't drive the demon out. The father was desperate because the demon in his son was trying to badly injure or even kill him. This is what the father told Jesus about his son. "He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the

mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid," Mark 9:17b-18a.

To understand the terrible reality caused by this demon possession of the son, let's see the complete desperation that comes from the father when he said, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us," Mark 9:22b (CSB). Jesus quickly demonstrated His compassion by both word and deed.

As the curious crowd surged in, Jesus "rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it

[the demon], 'You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: Come out of him and never enter him again.' Then it came out, shrieking and

throwing him into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse," Mark 9:25-26 (CSB).

There are details in this account that answer some important questions.

1. Some may ask: did Jesus believe that demons are real?

a. Jesus unequivocally commanded the mute and deaf demon, "Come

out of him and never enter him again," Mark 9:25 (CSB).

b. Jesus carefully taught the disciples how to deal with demons in a private instruction time in verses 28 and 29. Something He would only have done for a real problem. Look again at what the Lord told the apostles: "After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?'"

"And he told them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but prayer,'" Mark 9:28-29 (CSB).

2. Jesus' total real power over demons is shown in a couple of ways in this historically accurate account.

a. The devil's demon immediately recognized and feared Jesus Christ. Look into verse 20.

b. The son was completely and permanently healed of demon possession.

The point is Jesus Christ, Satan, and demons are real. But Satan, demons, and Satan's followers are losers - they have already lost.

Jesus Christ is the eternal winner. You can choose Christ and be a winner, too.

Hicks is Associational Missions Director for Jasper Association.

### Bible Studies for Life with Don Hicks



## EZELL

cont. from p. 1

After a 25-minute private meeting in the Oval Office with the president and First Lady Melania Trump, reporters were invited in for an impromptu update about relief efforts in Texas.

"We are pleased to receive an update from Gail, David, and Kevin on the work of the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief," Trump told reporters.

"The federal government is on the ground bringing its significant resources to bear, and I want to assure these organizations, and the others involved, that we will continue to coordinate with them and bring all of the relief and the comfort and everything else that we absolutely can to the Gulf Coast," the president said.

In his remarks at the briefing, Ezell spotlighted partnerships

that make such responses possible. "We're three different organizations but work best as one," Ezell said, referring to the SBDR partnership with American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

"The joy of this is we really do lock arms and have the capacity to feed over 400,000 people a day," he stressed.

Ezell also thanked Trump for the role the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has played during this and other crises.

"We have come through many disasters, and they have done a fantastic job of stepping up to the plate and being prepared and allowing us to volunteer in the way we're prepared to do," Ezell said.

After the White House meeting, Ezell said he was struck by how personally engaged in the relief effort are both Trump and his wife.

"I was grateful to see the compassion they expressed toward those who have been impacted

by this," Ezell said. "It was genuine compassion. You can tell the first lady has really been moved by this."

"Our faith compels us to serve those in need. Southern Baptists were invited here today because we have a 50-year record of helping people in times of disaster."

"When we all work together and cooperate, that's very powerful. My prayer is that Southern Baptists will continue partnering to meet the great needs in south Texas."



**ELEVEN KILLED** — Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno in northeastern Nigeria, is a frequent site of suicide bombings, increasingly carried out by young girls captured and used by Boko Haram. A suicide bomber detonated a vest in February in Maiduguri while in a convoy of civilian trucks, part of an attack that killed 11 people, UNICEF reported. (BP photo courtesy of UNICEF)

## Islamic terrorists increase use of children as suicide bombers

**NORTHEAST NIGERIA** (BP) — The use of children as suicide bombers by Islamic terrorists Boko Haram is at an all-time high in the Lake Chad region that includes northeast Nigeria and neighboring countries, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported on Aug. 22.

The jihadists have murdered at least 83 children since January by strapping them with bombs before sending them into public gathering places and detonating the explosives, UNICEF said in its press release.

About 55 of the victims were girls under the age of 15, as girls are often raped and become pregnant in Boko Haram captivity, UNICEF reported. At least one girl was much younger than a teenager, and the remaining 27 victims were boys.

"The use of children in this way is an atrocity," UNICEF said in the report. "Children used as 'human bombs' are, above all, victims, not perpetrators."

The numbers for less than eight months of 2017 are a drastic increase over the 30 killed as suicide bombers in all of 2016, UNICEF noted, as well as the 56 in 2015 and four in 2014.

In UNICEF's earlier report in April, Boko Haram had killed 27 children by using them as bombers.

"The use of children in this way is an atrocity.

Children used as 'human bombs' are, above all, victims, not perpetrators."

### UNICEF report

UNICEF gave no reason for the increased abuse of children, but Boko Haram began using more suicide bombers in general in late 2016 after the Nigerian military announced a technical defeat of the jihadists. A regional military force had so weakened Boko Haram that it could only launch isolated attacks by suicide bombs, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari had claimed.

In recent months, Boko Haram has managed to ambush entire villages, according to news reports from the region including Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.

As recently as July, Boko Haram killed at least 83 civilians and soldiers in two separate attacks in northeast Nigeria, including an ambush and suicide bombings. However, the Islamic jihadists have not been able to reestablish any caliphates in its quest to subject citizens to strict Sharia (Islamic) law.

At its strongest point in early 2015, Boko Haram held Islamic caliphates or Sharia-based governments covering

more than 20,000 square miles in northeast Nigeria.

Children who manage to escape Boko Haram's grasp are often feared and rejected when they return home and try to reintegrate into their communities. Their plight is also complicated by food shortages and malnutrition in the region including Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

In northeast Nigeria alone, up to 450,000 children are at risk of severe malnutrition this year, UNICEF said.

At the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February, donors pledged \$670 million to help an estimated 17 million people facing food shortages in the region, the United Nations reported.

The UN estimated about 10.7 million people needed immediate humanitarian assistance, including 8.5 million in northeastern Nigeria. Boko Haram violence was cited as the main cause of the food shortages.

The terrorists have killed between 20,000 and 25,000 people since 2009 and have displaced millions more, according to official estimates. Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, originally targeted Christians but has also killed moderate Muslims, government officials, and civilians.

## Ky. pastor proves door-to-door still effective evangelism

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)** — A Louisville pastor is busting the long-standing myth in the church world that door-to-door visitation is out of vogue and no longer effective.

Mark Bishop has knocked on about 200 doors a week since he arrived six months ago at Highview Baptist Church's Valley Station Campus. In that time, the campus pastor has seen attendance triple to nearly 300 and 37 new believers baptized.

"In this electronic age, people are shocked that I would take the time to stop by their house to talk to them in person," said Bishop, a strong advocate for so-called front porch evangelism.

Bishop is encouraging his ministry staff to make the rounds, too, going to local neighborhoods, apartment complexes, and mobile home parks and talking to anyone who will listen.

Answer or no, each location gets a small card with Highview Valley Station's address, worship times, and a concise account of the Gospel.

With the help of members spending their Sunday evenings going door to door, Bishop said the church has stood on more than 5,000 welcome mats — even in the rare instance when they weren't all that welcome.

"I think soul winning is easier caught than taught," Bishop said, referring to the newfound evangelical fervor at the church. "When they see it working, it becomes contagious."

Knocking on doors also has had an impact on friends of new believers who, after seeing a change in their acquaintances, are crossing a church threshold for the first time in their lives.

"Mark lives with Gospel passion and intentionality," Highview senior pastor Aaron Harvie said. "His love of Jesus and people is infectious."

Bishop isn't new to knocking on doors. As a teenaged preacher's kid in Arkansas, he would ring doorbells on Saturday asking children if they wanted to go to his dad's church.

"I would look for bicycles in the yard, anything that told me a kid lived there and then I'd pick them up on Sunday morning in the church bus," Bishop said. "Sometimes I'd bring 70 or 80 kids to church. I'd have to make two trips."

The youngest of three brothers to follow their father into ministry, Bishop said evangelism was a normal part of family life along with family devotions and Scripture memorization.

Even when he went to serve in the U.S. Army, Bishop couldn't deny the pull to preach and ended up becoming a chaplain for U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. His knock-on-doors routine on the military base resulted in 300 soldiers accepting Christ during one deployment.

"There is nothing better than one-on-one contact when sharing Jesus," said Paul Chitwood, the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) executive director. "While I am a firm believer in mass evangelism and pulpit evangelism, both will almost always involve one-on-one evangelism."

Chitwood said plans are underway for a similar evangelistic outreach for this year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Louisville. Crossover Louisville will involve a massive door-to-door campaign with members of KBC churches across the state coming into the city days in advance of the Nov. 14 meeting to share the Gospel.

The event is a partnership between Louisville Regional Association, Highview's Valley Station Campus, and the KBC evangelism team.

"Every Christian isn't called to preach to the masses," Chitwood said, "but every Christian is called to share Jesus at every opportunity."

That can include leaving a Gospel invitation behind at Dairy Queen. Bishop said that's how one Georgia transplant found her way to Highview Valley Station and is now a member.



**LOTS OF SHOE LEATHER** — Knocking on about 200 doors a week, Mark Bishop has seen attendance triple in six months and baptized 37 at Highview Church's Valley Station Campus in Louisville, Ky. (BP photo)